AN OLD WAGON ROAD.

It holds in a wide and easy curve,
The gold-shot mist of a willow clump,
And takes the sun, in a lazy swerve,
To clear the roots of a half-charred stump.
Yonder, ahead, where the slant is steep,
Turning aside from a primrose lane,
The cut of the wheel lies sharp and deep
In clay that gathered the slow spring rain.

But wild sweet clover in time can heal
The scars long left by the wagon wheel.

Adown the hollow it runs awry
With errant scorn of a settled pace;
The brown leaf-layers so densely lie
They hold the trail by the vaguest trace;
And lower still where the mold is wet
With trickling pearls of a wayside spring,
The slender arc of the track is set,
A couch for the wood-weeds' blossoming.

Across the hill, on the other side,
A new road runs to the village rim;
Its bed is graveled and hard and wide;
No star-weeds tangle along its brim.
It travels on through the sun's hot light
With naught of pausing to doze or dream;
No swerve it follows, to left or right—
No luring dip to a shade-cool stream.

And the old road idles its way alone,
A vagrant, careless of long neglect;
Witch-hazel threatened and bramble-grown,
It sinks in a hazy retrospect.
And inch by inch as the wild things creep
Closer and thicker with web and skein,
It lapses into a placid sleep,
A part, once more, of the wood's domain.

And wild sweet clover at last shall heal
The scars long left by the wagon wheel.

—Youth's Companion.

A FAMILY JAR.

By NETTA HAY.

They had been married exactly six months; Nell was reminding her husband of the fact as she walked down to the garden gate with him.

"Six months to-day, George, and we have never had the tiniest bit of a quarrel yet."

"No, dearie, not even the tiniest bit of a quarrel," George echoed. "Do you remember the compact we made at first? When some one was chaffing about family jars, we decided never to have one at all? Hasn't it worked splendidly!"

"Splendidly!" and Nell gave her husband's arm an affectionate little squeeze by way of leave-taking; and then she stood at the gate till a bend in the road hid him from view.

She sang a merry snatch of song as she came up the garden path again. The morning sunshine fell lovingly on the tiny house and the small patch of ground which they glorified by the name garden, and Nell was tempted to linger among the pansies, till the thought of the pile of unwashed breakfast dishes sent her indoors with a sigh.

Whilst tidying up she bethought herself that the special occasion warranted something special by the way of a dinner, and she went off in search of her favorite cookery-book.

It was missing from its accustomed place, and she was just beginning to feel a little irritated by the fruitless search when she recollected that George had been rearranging the shelves of the bookcase, and it was just possible that he had put the volume away unthinkingly.

And here it was, reposing snugly between a fat "Encyclopeadia" and smiled to herself as she slipped it from the shelf, and she stooped to pick up a piece of paper which had fluttered to the floor—evidently from the shelf, too.

She was crumpling it up in her hand preparatory to putting it in the stove, when she noticed her husband's handwriting on it. Almost unconsciously she smoothed out the sheea and read it:

My Dearest Alice: Will you please pardon the presumption which bids me lift my pen again! I know that your pure womanly soul will shrink from anything like disloyalty or duplicity, but I pray you to have patience with me awhile, ere I try to show you that I am not wholly to blame for the hateful tangle which has ruined our lives. God knows, darling, that I have been the victim of cruel circumstances, and I dare scarcely dwell on the maddening thought that never, till death comes to either one of us, shall the galling chain be broken. It is cruel now to talk of the might have been. Oh, Alice!—

And here the writing ceased.

Nell stood on the stair, looking before her with wide, unseeing eyes.

George, her George, to have penned this "infamous epistle"!

She read it again, and the passionate words burned themselves into her brain and sang dizzily in her ears.

It was incredulous, preposterous, she told herself, and yet here was the proof before her eyes, true and tangible, in George's own beautiful writing.

She sank down on the stairs, a limp heap of dejection. That she had not been the first, the only one, after all—that was the thought that hurt most. Everything else seemed to fade before this overwhelming possibility even the knowledge that her husband had broken faith with her; for Nell had loved deeply and passionately, and the hot, fierce jealousy with which such love is said to be seasoned was stinging her now with cruel intensity.

Trifling things which she had scarcely seemed to notice came to her now full of startling moment. She persuaded herself that of late George had grown strangely mysterious in his doings.

Once or twice she had surprised him busily writing when she had expected him to be doing something else; and once—how bitterly came the remembrance of it!—she had awakened during the night to find that George was still downstairs at his desk, and when questioned he had flushed and muttered some unintelligible excuse.

And this was the sort of thing that had kept him busy and preoccupied! Nell looked at the paper again. How blind she had been!—she who had thought that her husband could have no secret from her, she who had prided herself on being able to read his inmost soul. And oh! the pity of it, this was their wedding-day.

The remembrance of the morning, and George's bright face, brought a plea for his innocence, and she walked to the stove and held the note dangerously near to the dancing flames.

But the one word "Alice" seemed to grow suddenly more distinct, and almost fiercely Nell's fingers clutched the paper again.

She had a vague notion that she would show George the letter and demand an explanation, but as yet heart and brain were in too great a tumult; she could devise no plan of action. So she slipped the paper inside the folds of her blouse, and went about her household duties with a heavier heart than ever she had borne in all her young life.

Somehow the weary hours dragged past; sometimes Nell was longing feverishly for her husband's return, and then the thought of this terrible thing made the red blood flush her cheeks, and she was fain to admit to herself that she was afraid to meet him.

Afraid of George!—she laughed mirthlessly at the thought of it. But her hand involuntarily sought the letter in its resting-place, and once again came all the bitter thoughts that had been born of her misery.

At length the garden gate clicked, and with a feeling, half of shame, half of assumed indifference, Nell picked up a magazine. It would serve to hide her crimson cheeks till she got calmer, and if she intended to be deep in a story, George should not mark the unusual want of greeting.

But there were other footsteps on the gravel surely, and she could hear her husband laughing and talking with someone. Presently he ushered in a stranger, and Nell had to gather her scattered wits to give him a welcome. With a woman's want of logic she was telling herself that George might have chosen some more convenient season for bringing his friend, but it was with a sigh of relief that she took her seat at the head of the dainty table, for here, at least, she reflected, was an opportunity for putting off the evil hour.

Always the soul of hospitality, Nell surpassed herself that evening, and George watched her with honest pride. He scarcely noticed that she was ignoring him in order to entertain Jack Haldane, and how could he know that the bright sayings and the ringing laughter were because her heart was sore.

It was late when Jack Haldane rose to depart, and they both accompanied him to the gate.

Nell had just been extending another early invitation to him, and George was saying "Good-night," when Haldane said suddenly, "Oh, by the bye, George, I saw Alice yesterday, she was inquiring kindly for you—an old sweetheart of your husband's, Mrs. Douglas"; and he swang off down the road laughing gaily.

Nell spoke first, when she had gained the shelter of the parlor. She stood on the rug and faced George with an angry spot burning on either cheek.

"George Douglas," she said, in a level, strained voice, "what is the meaning of this?"

George looked at her in wonderment, then enlightenment came.

"It was too bad," he said, apologetically. "I should have given you warning that I was bringing a guest, but you got on all right, you know the dinner was splendid. I—I—"

"The dinner!" said Nell, scornfully. "Who spoke of dinners? It is this woman I want to know about—this sweetheart."

"Nell!" George was regarding her with an incredulous expression on his face.

"Ah, you may well look surprised! You did not think that some day your secrets would be found out. You had better deny that this is the sort of thing you sit up at nights to write I—I—" But Nell had collapsed on the couch, a disconsolate heap of misery; and George, with white, set face, was looking at the note she had taken from her blouse.

A pucker gathered between his brows, and it was well that Nell did not see the stern expression of his face just then.

There was silence for awhile, broken only by Nell's fitful sobs.

George was so quiet that at length she grew frightened and, looking up, she ventured a feeble "Well?"

Her husband did not look at her as he answered, he kept staring straight into the fire, but there was that in his voice which hurt her, more than the words he said.

"Yes, Nell, this is what I have been sitting up to do. I can't think how I have been so careless to leave this lying about, for as you surmise, it is a secret from my wife. A week or two ago I was rummaging in that old desk Uncle Angus left, and I came upon a bundle of old manuscripts which he had evidently written in his younger days. There was a bundle of love-letters among them, and from them I gathered an old romance, which partly explains the old man's lonely existence. In a spirtit of idle curiosity I gathered the fragments together, wrote some bogus letters in answer to the faded, scented ones in the desk, changed the names, and read with infinite relish one of the quaintest of old-world stories. I intended to show it to you, but Dickson, of the Elite Magazine, called one day when I was busy on it, and I allowed him to read it. He was delighted, said that there was a furore for such literature just now, and asked to be allowed to use it. I demurred at first, but in the end I gave it to him, thinking that the check I'm to get in return would buy a pretty birthday present for a little woman I know."

"Oh, George, it's been such a day;" and Nell sobbed out the whole story of her misery and her penitence.

And by and by she smiled through her tears as they went over the tangle of the evidence, and she quite forgot the hateful "Alice" whom Jack Haldane had mentioned, till George explained that she was the sister of his chum, and had been happily married for many a year.

A fortnight later they read the proofs of George's story, and as Nell laughed and cried over the story of the old-world lovers, she vowed in heart that never again, as long as she had life, would she be tempted to distrust her husband.—London S. S Times.

Trial by Jury Losing Ground.

Trial by jury continues to decline in popularity in the county courts, notwithstanding the numerical change in the jury and the increase in the more important cases. The number of actions determined in 1905 was 875,280 and only 843 were tried by juries. This is the lowest number of which there is any record in the returns. Juries have never been much in request in the county courts. The demand for their services has actually diminished as the business of the courts has increased: 1875, 1039; 1885, 1150; 1895, 1186; 1905, 843.

There were ten circuits in 1905 on which the number of cases tried by juries did not exceed three. On the circuit which includes Bolton, Wigan and Oldham not a single case was tried by a jury during the year. In the employment of jurors, as in the treatment of debtors, the views of County Court Judges differ. The decline of trial by jury in the county courts may be attributed not so much to an increasing want of faith in the institution on the part of litigants as to the strong prejudice which some County Court Judges exhibit against it.—London Law Journal.

He Did What He Could.

"I hope my little Tommy has taken to heart mamma's talk of last night about charity and usefulness," said a fond mother. "How many acts of kindness has he done? How many hearts has my Tommy made grateful and glad?"

Her Tommy replied:

"I've done a whole lot of good, ma. I gave your new hat to a beggar woman, and I gave cook's shoes to a little girl in busted rubbers what I seen on the street, and I gave a poor, lame shoestring-seller pa's black evening suit, the open-front one that he hardly ever wears."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Oil has been discovered on the island of Wakenaam, at the mouth of the Essiquibo River, Demerara, at a depth of eighty feet.

"Good" Spelling

Scientific Phonetic Principles Groundwork of the Simplified Spelling Board's Crusade.

By Benjamin E. Smith.

IT is true that the only really good spelling is phonetic spelling; it is unfortunately true that our orthography, though not wholly unphonetic, is from the true phonetic point of view little less than a nightmare; but it is also true that to reform it phonetically would necessitate a radical transformation of the great majority of the familiar forms of English words, because it would involve extensive alterations of the alphabet. To say, as some do, that this alphabetic reconstruction should be the end rather than the beginning—a goal to which a gradual approach may be made—is only to recommend the substitution of prolonged confusion and anarchy for a quick and sweeping revolution. But that the great mass of English-speakers, who, as Prof. Lounsbury has said, have lost the phonetic sense, will consent to give up at once or gradually, through a transition period of vexatious confusion, their orthographic habits, their prejudices and their convenience, in order that their spelling, or that of their grandchildren, may assume a form which, from its strangeness seems to them utterly repulsive, is a supposition which cannot be entertained unless one relies upon the scientific accuracy of one's principles more than upon one's knowledge of human nature.

The full recognition of this fact by the Simplified Spelling Board is what chiefly distinguishes its program and makes it a practicable and hopeful one. All of its members, probably heartily believe in the phonetic principle; they may expect or hope that some time it may be embodied in English orthography; but they are agreed that it must be subordinated to other practical principles in any reform for which it is reasonable to work. They have not abandoned the standard of the earlier revolt; but they have changed the point of attack and the plan of campaign. This should be distinctly grasped by all who are interested in their work and plans.—The Century.

Using a Giant's Strength

By F. W. Greer.

THERE are two causes that help make the conditions which call for exposure and reform. The first is unlimited profit and the second is the right of a strong brain to take undue advantage of a weaker brain.

In the future we will see a legal rate of profit as we now see a legal rate of interest, and there will be as great a sentiment against the misuse of brain power as there is against the misuse of physical power. In the future no person will be allowed legally to use his brain power to exact exorbitant profits from the people any more than a pugilist now has the legal right to use his great physical power to commit highway robbery.

In the savage state a person uses his physical and mental force as he chooses, but in a civilized community these have to be modified according to the wishes and needs of the community. We have put a restraining hand on the brutal exercise of physical force; now let us put forth the same effort and control the brutal (I know of no better word) exercise of the mental force.

Let me illustrate: I am a person of ordinary mental force and of ordinary strength and have a fair amount of wealth. One person tries to get my wealth by physical force and another by mental force (high finance). One class is as harmful as the other to the community.

Every person endowed with extra physical and mental force is entitled to compensation for all the extra services he can render because of such endowments, but he has no right to use such endowments to force from another his wealth unless we go back to a nature where "every man is a law unto himself."

The Growing Passion for Music

By Rupert Hughes.

WHATEVER the percentage of American musical illiteracy may have been a few years ago, it is beyond denial that there is a tremendous change at work. The whole nation is feeling a musical uplift like a sea that swells above a submarine earthquake.

The trouble hitherto has not been that Americans were of a fibre that was dead to musical thrill. Our hearts are not of flannel, and we are not a nation of soft pedals. We have simply been too busy hacking down trees and making bricks without straw, to go to music school. But now, the sewing machine, the telephone, the typewriter and the trolley car are sufficiently installed to give us leisure to take up music and see what there is in it.

We are beginning to learn that, while The Arkansas Traveler, Money Musk, and Nellie Was a Lady are all very well in their way, there are higher and more interesting things in music.

There is an expression which musicians hear every day: "I am passionately fond of music but I don't understand it. I know what I like, but I can't tell why."

This speech has become a byword among trained musicians, but it indicates a widespread condition that is at once full of pathos and of hope. America as a nation is "passionately fond of music." It needs only an education in the means of expression.—Good Housekeeping.

Nicolai Looks Backward.

Nicolai has been very much impressed with his Sunday school lessons, especially those telling of the creation of the world. He asks his mother numerous questions concerning the original state of things, and does not seem quite satisfied with the replies, as is evident from a recent prayer he made, which included a petition asking the Lord to "please tell me what there was way, way back, in the years before there was any backs to the years."—Harper's Weekly.

The medical faculty of the Paris University plans an international technological encyclopedia. It is to be issued in ten languages including "Esperanto," the world language.

Quite Likely.

"I wonder," said the man who was given to thought at times, "I wonder what is meant by the 'embarrassment of riches'?"

"The poor relation, very likely," replied the man who was one.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Three German battalions at Metz are to experiment with gray-green uniforms, the metal parts being of dull brown. The kaiser is not yet satisfied as to the comparative invisibility of the two shades.

The Mexicans claim to have the finest harbor on the Pacific coast at Manzanillo. About $3,500,000 (gold) has been spent on it, and $2,500,000 more is to be spent in perfecting it.